crop approved by the Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC) for commercial cultivation in nine cotton growing States namely Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Punjab, Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu. The total area under Bt cotton cultivation is approximately 128,44,000 acres. The GEAC has also approved the field testing of Bt rice, Bt okra, Bt bringal, Bt tomato, Bt potato, Bt groundnut and Bt cotton expressing new gene events of which field trials of Bt rice, Bt okra, Bt brinal and Bt cotton have been initiated. The states where field trials of GM crops have been undertaken include Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Gujarat, Haryana, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharasthra, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamilnadu, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal.

(c) Extensive Rules and guidelines have been framed for evaluating the environmental and health safety aspects of genetically modified crops. The GEAC also takes into consideration the results of the biosafety data, findings of the field trials as well as recommendations of the Monitoring cum Evaluation Committee (MEC) constituted by the Government for evaluating the field trials of GM crops and recommendations of the Indian Council of Agriculture Research (ICAR) before approving the GM crop for commercial cultivation. Only those transgenic crops which are found to be safe for human consumption as well as the environment are approved for commercial release.

Study of sea behaviour

453. MS. PRAMILA BOHIDAR:
SHRI B.J. PANDA:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether a Central team has visited Orissa coastal region to study the sea behaviour *i.e.* its advancement towards the land along the Puri coast etc.;

(b) whether the sea has washed away some newly built roads along the Marine Drive posing serious threat to a number of new hotels and apartments coming up along the coast; and

(c) if so, the details of the study so conducted *inter-alia* indicating the action plan of Government to address this problem?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) to (c) The information is being collected and will be laid on Table of the House.

Contamination of water in Mettur, Tamil Nadu

454. SHRI N.R. GOVINDARAJAR: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that agriculture lands in Tamil Nadu particularly around River Cauvery region are losing its fertility due to a private chemical company, of which hazardous chemicals residue begin mixed with river water near Mettur;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government are also aware that a number of people are being affected by unknown diseases due to contaminated water in Mettur area in Tamil Nadu;

(d) whether Government have received any representation regarding such problems requesting to take necessary action; and

(e) if so, the action taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) and (c) As per information provided by Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board (TNPCB), M/s Chemplast Sanmar Pvt. Ltd. group is operating five units in Mettur area of Tamil Nadu. Four units of the group were generating trade effluent from their processing activities and the same were reported to be discharged in their own land from the initial period onwards. Presently, the treated trade effluent of the three units is being discharged using pipelines after satisfying the standards prescribed by the Board into the surplus water course of the river Cauvery. The effluent of the fourth unit is reported to be treated and reused in the process. The fifth unit is reported to recycle the effluent of their process, hence producing no discharge. Apart from the discharge of effluent into the surplus water course of the river Cauvery no other hazardous chemical residue is reported to be mixed in the river water.

(c) to (e) The TNPCB has received a representation in respect of the units of M/s Chemplast Sanmar Pvt. Ltd. The State Pollution Control Board has directed two units of the group to achieve zero discharge. Works are under progress in the units to achieve zero discharge. As regards the third unit, the same is reported to have been converted from mercury cell process to membrane cell process, which has been commissioned during August 2007. The Chemplast group has also been directed to carry out the health study in the vicinity of the unit is Mettur and also in the nearby villages.

Endosulfan rich pesticides

455. SHRI MOTIUR RAHMAN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Endosulfan rich pesticides are being extensively used in Delhi's neighbouring States of Rajasthan, Punjab, Haryana and Western Uttar Pradesh, poisoning the Capital's air;

(b) whether Endosulfan is dangerous for human bodies and a high concentration can cause cancer; and

(c) if so, measures taken to cleanse the 'breathing air[1] zone of Delhi from poisonous contents etc?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRl NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) to (c) As per the information made available by the Ministry of Agriculture and the Central Pollution Control Board, no such information is available on the extensive usages of Endosulfan rich pesticides in Delhi's neghbouring States poisoning the Capital's air. Recent literature clearly indicates that endosulfan is not acutely toxic and is not an endocrine disrupter. Investigations of chronic human toxicity exert endosulfan to be also neither a carcinogen nor a reproductive toxin. Further, no accurate date related to the carcinogenicity of Endosulfan in humans is available.

Aid for Plantation

† 456. SHRI SURENDRA LATH: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the State Government of Orissa has asked for an aid of Rs. 20 crore from Government for plantation to save the coastal areas of Baleshwar, Bhadrak, Kendrapada, Jagatsingh, Puri, Ganjam and Khurda districts of the State from losses due to sea tide;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

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† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.